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SUBJECT: PARIS PACT BREAKS NEW GROUND

REFS: A).UNVIE 003, B).08 UNVIE 638, C).08 UNVIE 634

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) The Sixth Policy Consultative Group Meeting of the Paris Pact Initiative was held in Vienna December 15-16, 2008. African states participated in this annual meeting for the first time. Members reviewed the 2008 roundtables and approved three for 2009. UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa, in his opening remarks, criticized the roundtables for producing too much paperwork but not enough practical results. He challenged member states to focus on concrete results, proposing some specific goals such as doubling drug seizures, cutting precursors inflow, improving the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) with Pakistan, and listing drug criminals according to UNSC resolutions. Rising to Costa's challenge and with our encouragement, Germany convened a small group of countries on the margins to discuss establishing practical benchmarks. In the end Germany asked the Secretariat to draft a paper, for consideration at the next Policy Consultative Group meeting, on ways to make Paris Pact more results-oriented. Although Costa's criticism was made particularly for dramatic effect, this German request could eventually lead to the adoption of specific indicators, and fits with our desire to make UNDOC operationally effective.

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador advocated for other member states to contribute to the Good Performers' Initiative and supported Costa's call for the Paris Pact to become more muscular. On the margins, he met with Afghan Minister of Counternarcotics Khodaidad and Deputy Minister of Interior General Daud Daud (Ref A). END SUMMARY

NEEDS "SURGERY" AGAINST OPIUM

¶3. (U) In his opening remarks, Costa noted the positive trends: poppy cultivation declined 19 percent in 2008, production was down 6 percent, and opium prices fell 20 percent. Afghans involved in opium cultivation dropped by 1 million, and the export value of opium was down by 15 percent to USD 3.4 billion. However, he cautioned that the opium problem was a "metastasizing cancer," concentrated in five insecure southern provinces. He estimated the Taliban received \$250 million to \$470 million from levies they imposed on opium production, processing and trafficking. Costa called for urgent "surgery," and expressed his disappointment that ISAF forces had not moved to strike drug targets.

Priorities and Practical Results

14. (U) Costa identified some priorities for the Pact, such as increasing opium interdiction rates from the current 25 percent, increasing the number of opium-free provinces from the current 18, stimulating bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and fighting corruption and money laundering. He urged attention on East Africa, a transit stop for Afghan opium. He claimed that the 15 Paris Pact roundtables over the past five years had produced a lot of paperwork but not enough results. Success, he argued, will be judged by results, not process. He challenged participants to strengthen practical cooperation - on intelligence sharing, joint operations, and concrete measures to prevent and treat drug abuse. He urged development of concrete goals in these areas, including doubling drug seizures, cutting precursor inflow, improving the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) with Pakistan, and listing drug criminals according to UNSC resolutions. "We need to give the Paris Pact more testosterone", Costa argued.

Measuring Success

15. (SBU) At Ambassador's suggestion, German Ambassador Luedeking invited his counterparts from the U.S., France, Canada, and Russia, as well as UNODC's new Kabul office chief Jean-Luc Lemahieu, to a meeting on the margins to discuss benchmarks to measure success. Lemahieu urged a limited geographic focus. Ambassador advocated "a simple set of metrics" such as increasing the number of poppy-free provinces and increased interdiction of precursor chemicals. Expressing understanding for Lemahieu's position, he nevertheless pointed out the importance of going beyond Afghanistan's immediate neighbors. Canada proposed examining the Proliferation Security Initiative, with "a clear set of principles," as a possible model for operational benchmarks for the Paris Pact. According to Canada, such benchmarks could include increased seizures, tightening the flow of containers, and arresting traffickers.

16. (SBU) Russia cautioned against an "overnight revolution," noting that the Paris Pact is a partnership mechanism for a "balanced, comprehensive approach." Germany suggested a two-track approach: benchmarks for the Rainbow Strategy on the one hand, and benchmarks for expert roundtables on the other. France proposed using UNSC Resolution 1817 (June 2008, on Afghanistan precursor chemicals) as a benchmark. However, at the conclusion of the Paris Pact meeting on December 16, Germany only asked the secretariat to produce a paper, on ways to make the Pact more results-oriented, for discussion/consideration at the next Policy Consultative Group meeting in December 2009.

REVIEW OF 2008 ROUNDTABLES

17. (U) The recommendations from the 2008 expert roundtables on the Black Sea region, eastern Africa, and financial flows were reviewed.

All conference presentations are available upon request (MoralesBA@state.gov). On the Black Sea roundtable, participants recognized that various platforms exist, but none encompasses all member states. In the absence of a unifying platform, UNODC committed to developing a technical cooperation program. The East Africa roundtable concluded that priority areas for that region include 1) research and analysis, 2) legislation, 3) national operational capacities, and 4) cooperation at the national and regional levels. UNODC presented the recently-developed two-year

regional program entitled, "Promoting the Rule of Law and Human Security in Eastern Africa." The discussion on financial flows included a presentation by the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Center of Afghanistan (FinTRACA) describing the challenges and approaches in dealing with hawalas.

2009 Roundtables and African Reaction

18. (U) Three roundtables (Ref B) were adopted for 2009: "Afghanistan and neighboring countries" to assess both demand and supply issues after the elections in Afghanistan; "European heroin trafficking and abuse" in a western European city; and "Central Asia and China" to

be hosted in Almaty to discuss Afghan heroin trafficking and abuse in Central Asia and Western China. Several East African delegations expressed disappointment that Africa would not be the focus of one of the 2009 roundtables. This feeling was exacerbated when UNODC suggested that East Africa should be discussed in a different framework outside of the Paris Pact, to which the Kenyan delegate responded, "then what is the purpose of Africans in the Paris Pact - why are we here?" The Secretariat explained that since a roundtable was held in Nairobi in 2008, the Secretariat would be meeting with the African states regularly to evaluate the progress on implementing the recommendations from the roundtable. (Note: UNODC's Paris Pact coordinator told Counselor subsequently that such a meeting with seven African partner states had been previously scheduled for February 2009. End Note.

GOOD PERFORMERS INITIATIVE

¶9. (U) Ambassador delivered a presentation on the Good Performers Initiative (GPI), encouraging other states to contribute. Afghanistan's Minister of Counternarcotics, General Khodaidad, expressed his appreciation for U.S. assistance, and called on Canada, Japan, the EU, and EC to support counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan. Germany and Canada appeared receptive to the GPI's potential.

COMMENT

¶10. (SBU) This was the first Paris Pact Policy Consultative Group meeting to include participants from outside the West/Central Asia region. The African participants--from Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, and Tanzania--were obviously pleased that an international forum was engaged in helping them to address their serious opium transit problem.

¶11. (SBU) Costa's criticism of the Paris Pact for not having produced concrete results appears to have been intended at least in part to grab the attention of delegates, and to spur them to think ambitiously. Also of note, given criticism from some of the EU members, was Costa's forthright warning that firm NATO action against drug-related targets is essential to extirpating the opium "cancer." Through its Rainbow Strategy, the Paris Pact has improved counternarcotics coordination and cooperation in the region, even though such improvement may not be easily measurable. It has also shown tangible results in the seizure of precursor chemicals. Perhaps it is with these points--and Russia's cautious voice--in mind, that Germany eventually requested the Secretariat to produce a more general paper for discussion/consideration next December. Incremental as this request may be, it could still lead eventually to the adoption of specific indicators of success. End Comment.

Schulte
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